

## CSF Members Participate in Lake Merrill Clean Up

Lake Merrill is the nearest "fly fishing only" lake to the Vancouver area and it is only thirty miles and forty-five minutes from Battle Ground. Access is gained through a small Washington State Department of Natural Resources campground which has 7 or 8 tent campsites, a boat launch and a small day use area. The lake contains brown trout which are planted as fingerlings every two or three years and by native cutthroat. The gate to the campground is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day, but the lake is open for fly fishing year-round.

On Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, sixteen members of the CSF armed with rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows and other assorted tools worked to help prepare the campground, boat launch and day use area for the late May opening. Prior to beginning the work day at nine A.M., thirteen of the members met for a hearty breakfast at Jack's Restaurant about eight miles from the lake. At the lake we were met by Shayne Cothorn, WSDNR Public Use and Stewardship Forester, and Dee Becker, WSDNR Volunteer Coordinator. They explained what work was necessary and provided some large power equipment including an excavator. They also provided a couple dozen "double K 'O' rings" (Krispy Kreme donuts) for everyone. Very high lake levels during the winter had made a mess of paths and parking areas by depositing large logs and piles of driftwood throughout the area. Frank Berge, assisted by his son, Dakota, and their chainsaw cut the logs into manageable size chunks, and Shayne removed them with the excavator. Susan Gray and Linda Bieker prepped and painted one of the outhouses. Everyone participated in raking up driftwood and wheelbarrowing it into piles to be burned or dumping it into locations that would discourage use of "unofficial" trails. The crews also destroyed some illegal campsites, opened and cleared blocked culverts and regraded pathways after repairing and replacing border boards which had been washed out of place by wave action.

Our work was completed at about one P.M., and the area looked much better than when we had arrived. CSF members who gave so freely of their time were: Dakota and Frank Berge, Wayne Bigelow, Roger Cox, Steve Cushing, Susan and Kent Gray, Mark Meyer, Ralph Randall, Brian(Joe)Smith, Jim Swatosh, Dick Tellvik, Dennis Ward, Steve Wright, and Linda and Warren Bieker. We were joined by Peter Carlos, an Oregon fly fishing club member and Battle Ground resident, and Steve Meyer, a Ridgefield resident who is applying for the position of campground host.

The CSF Board of Directors is currently studying the possibility of partnering with the WSDNR in a volunteer program called "Site Stewardship". The club might take on some responsibility during the year to do other clean ups or workdays if the need arises and if sufficient interest is shown by our members. We could also report any dangerous conditions that develop, report poachers, illegal campfires, camping in prohibited areas, and any other matters that concern us. If you think you'd be willing to participate in such a partnership, please contact Warren Bieker at 360-687-5475 or email at [ljbieker@comcast.net](mailto:ljbieker@comcast.net) and please remember when you fish Lake Merrill this year to take a garbage bag and pick up lake-side rubbish if you see any. Lets begin a new effort together to take care of "our lake."



Warren Bieker

**"The attraction of angling for all the ages of men, from the cradle to the grave, lies in it's uncertainty. 'Tis an affair of luck."** Henry Van Dyke



## Lake Merrill Clean Up (continued)

As a result of the work done on April 29 by a group of Clark-Skamania Flyfishers, together with Washington state parks people, Lake Merrill will be opening early this year. It was a great day spent cleaning up the drift wood left by high water. This project was promoted and coordinated by Warren Bieker.

Attached are photos of the fishing parking lot as we found it, during clean up, and after. There is also a shot of a handicapped trail that was cleaned up with the sawdust left from a large log that was by the trail.

We cleaned up the fishing parking lot, the camping area, the handicapped trail, the day use picnic area, and some drainage ways. It is hoped that the club will adopt the lake and help keep the area clean and pleasant.

Roger Cox



All Pictures by Roger Cox

**"A fish story backed by visual evidence is something you don't run into everyday." Red Smith**